whether after conducting techno-feasibility study at the defence airstrips in Chennai recently, the Civil Aviation Ministry moved to extend the concept of airstrips across the country;

whether the Ministry of Defence agreed to the proposal made by Civil Aviation Ministry; and

(d) if so, by what time final decision will be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Some of the defence airfields are already being used for civil operations. Opening of the other defence airfields for civil ' operations is considered by Government as and when any such proposal is received, on a case to basis, keeping in view the operational requirements of the defence forces.

(b) to (d) No such study has been conducted by Airports Authority of India/Ministry of Civil Aviation in this regard.

Adequacy of maritime security

3893. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

whether the maritime security is sufficient to protect offshore oil and gas blocks etc., in the country;

if so, the details thereof;

whether the Government proposes to raise the manpower strength of the offshore Defence Advisory Group of the Indian Navy; and

if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) India's coastal waters are guarded by the Indian Coast Guard and the Indian Navy in coordination with the State Police. India's strategic and economic interests in Indian Ocean Region are well protected and the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard are geared into ensuring the safety of India's .maritime interests.

The security and surveillance apparatus in India's territorial waters and exclusive economic zone have been enhanced substantially over the years. The improvement of such an apparatus, based on left needs, is an ongoing process.

Army officers involved in replaing kerosene and diesel with water in J&K

3894. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that senior Army officers including Brig, and Lt. Col. alongwith others have been recently chargesheetd by the J&K Police for allegedly replacing kerosene and diesel in tankers meant for troops inSiachen with water;

if so, the details thereof; and

whether it is also a fact that these officials have not been tried by the Army and if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) A solitary incident came

to the notice of the Government in July, 2005 regarding water being supplied instead of diesel in seven tankers of Indian Oil Corporation in Ladakh region of Northern Command. A Court of Inquiry was instituted by Army HQ which was completed on 30th July, 2005. Based on the findings of the Court of Inquiry, disciplinary action has been directed against two Army officers among others. Administrative action has been taken against four other officers who were involved in the incident. FIR was lodged against the civilian drivers of the Petroleum Lorries by the Police.

J&K Police has filed a chargesheet against one Brigadier level officer and one Lt. Col. level officer alongwith other on 3.3.2008 in the Hon'ble Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Leh. The case came up for hearing before CJM, Leh on 4.4.2008. The Army has been given time to exercise option of taking over the case in terms of Section 549 Criminal Procedure Code and Army Act Section 125.

Deaths on INS Jalashwa

3895. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

whether an officer and five cadets were killed on board INS Jalashwa last month due to leakage of toxic hydrogen sulphide from sewage pipes;

whether this warship was bought from US without physical assessment and technical evaluation apart from the fact that this 37 year old ship has already outlives its service span; and

if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) On the 1 st February, 2008, when the Indian Navy ship, INS Jalashwa, was at sea, one officer and five sailors of the Indian Navy, who were aboard the ship, died after inhalation of toxic gas, which, apparently, leaked accidentally.

(b) and (c) The Indian Navy acquired INS Jalashwa (ex-USS Trenton) after a Joint Visual Inspection of the ship. The ship was 36 years old, but the Indian Navy assessed her residual life to be above 10 years.

Resolution of differences over purchase of Gorshkov

3896. SHRIMATI JAYABACHCHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state: .

whether Government has resolved the differences with Russia over the purchase of the aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov during the visit of Russian PM Viktor Zubkov to India recently;

if so, the details thereof; and

the other issues that were discussed with the visiting dignitary?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) The Russian side has submitted a revised Master Schede indicating a delay in the project and an increase in price for repair and re-equipping of ex-Admiral Gorshkov. The process of examination of the scope and necessity for additional work projected by Russian side has been initiated. The Prime Minister of Russian Federation, Mr. Viktor Zubkov visited India on 12-13, February